

OUTLOOK

By Bruce F. Shank, Executive Editor

U.S. Wins No Medals With Olympics Field

Poor communication between the designers of the Los Angeles Coliseum field, site of the 1984 Olympics, and the crew that maintains the field is causing some unnecessary problems and a great deal of embarrassment.

I visited the field in June with editorial advisor and Cal Poly-Pomona Professor of Horticulture Dr. Kent Kurtz. Our conclusion was the maintenance crew may have damaged the design characteristics of the field by topdressing with a sludge-like product referred to as "Nitrohumous". The maintenance program developed by the designer, Redeturf, Inc., of Aurora, OR, did not include use of such topdressing materials without prior consultation. As a result, the root system of the Santa Ana bermudagrass is less than two-inches deep when it should be more than a foot deep. Overseeded perennial ryegrass dominates the turf.

The Hy-Play design is a modified sand rootzone with washed sod, fertilization through the irrigation system, and intensive drainage installed in a gravel base. Dr. Henry Indyk of Rutgers University is a consultant to Hy-Play for the Coliseum field. The field was installed last summer. The center section of the field was resodded after the Raiders' football season ended last fall. Apparently, the topdressing in question was applied this past February over the entire field.

Recently, the Coliseum manager, Jim Hardy, invited Toro Vice President Jim Watson to check the field. Until the month of June, no one from the Los Angeles area extension service or university system had been asked to help with the field.

Dr. Kurtz and I spoke with the contractor for the field, Nick Tavaglione Construction of Riverside, CA. Nick Jr. is very proud of the field, as are other suppliers like Toro and Advanced Drainage Systems.

Soil tests are now being done. The jury is still out, and hopefully a real jury will not enter the case.

The fact remains that poor communication has damaged a field that millions of people will see during the Olympics next year. Los Angeles-area agronomists are upset they were not asked to help with the field. The Coliseum manager is complaining about a lack of service from Hy-Play. The Coliseum maintenance manager, Bob Williams, is keeping quiet, as are other involved.

Talk gentlemen, talk, before time runs out.

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